1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

[P, 180-A]

society. Schebesta also mentions other instruments particularly associated with *nkumbi* (and the secret society) among the south Lese, namely: the bull-roarer (*pahudjuhudju* or *hudjuhudju*); a flute (*likuru*); a singing pot (*pengi*); and the large wooden trumpet (*asaragba*). The invitation to the Mbuti to take part in the *nkumbi* is one of the ways in which the villagers seek to maintain and extend their control over the Pygmies.

Schebesta concludes that we must distinguish two elements in the *nkumbi*: the villager element of initiation associated with circumcision and, quite distinct from it, the Pygmy element of initiation into the men's secret society (*tore*).

Marriage

Schebesta (1948, 343) writes that it is difficult to determine which is the stronger, the interests of the hunting band or the interests and mutual affection of the two individuals concerned.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[ARCHERS]

Marriage is certainly an economic factor of the greatest importance to the band, and the decision of the elders usually prevails. But according to Schebesta, if there is particularly ardent affection between an unmarried couple, they may be strong enough to resist group opinion even to the point of ignoring its just claims, in which case a compromise will be reached by the bands concerned. Although there may be preferences for marriage between certain bands, no marriage is arranged with disregard for individual inclinations. Each union is usually preceded by a period of flirtation and courtship.

The rule of exogamy bars any flirtation within a hunting band that consists of a single lineage. If the band consists of two lineages, there may be flirtation but controlled by the parents, the mother keeping an eye on her daughter, and the fathers or lineage heads watching over the boys. Schebesta believes that in spite of such supervision there is, in fact, great premarital freedom, though always outside the bounds of exogamic prohibition. For the Efe, he records what appears to be a borrowed custom of making payments to the father of the girl, or to her mother, either for the privilege of having an affair with their daughter or as a penalty for being discovered.[1]

[1] Masturbation (*ai ofuni*), homosexuality (*ai bopa*), and adultery are known among the archers, but rarely. Lesbians (*dora bopa*) are unknown. Mbuti who practice such behavior are regarded by men with derision; women have a particular horror of homosexuals.

[P. 180-B]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[ARCHERS]

[P.180-C]

Marriage, however, is not necessarily preceded by a period of courtship. Schebesta (1952, 233) attests to the betrothal of infants by their parents but does not know how frequently these betrothals result in marriage. The ultimate essential is agreement between individuals and their respective lineages. The qualities in a man appreciated by a girl are courage, decision, prowess in the hunt, and ability in the dance. Her hunting band also appreciates these qualities and receives favorably any suitor who brings presents of game that he has killed, but it is said to be more interested in the suitor's band. There is no formal adult betrothal; the boy visits the girl's camp and spends some days there, giving her small presents. Her acceptance of the presents and reciprocation of his attentions constitute betrothal; it remains only to secure the agreement of the two bands and to overcome the obstacle of exchange price. If a youth fears that his prowess as a hunter or dancer is not sufficiently impressive to prove his manliness, he will resort to various love philters. Philters are also used by Mbuti girls.

584 • [581] [431] [832]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 221-A]

621 58 582 exogamy have been observed. When it is between two bands, then the Mbuti prefer them to be as far apart as possible. The trouble they envisage in a marriage with a member of a nearby band is friction between themselves and the village patron of the incoming bride. He will constantly assert every claim he has, or thinks he has, to her services, even to her children when she revisits her own band. As far as the two Mbuti bands are concerned, such a marriage would be on an exchange basis, thus maintaining the economic balance of each band. If the groom's band cannot find a suitable girl to offer, his mother's band may be asked to find one. There is always the alternative of compensation or service, or both. For compensation the help of the village patron is usually sought, and the marriage is arranged by him. Such marriages are usually subject, in the first place, to the normal Mbuti custom, which involves no ceremony other than a mutually agreeable exchange and a token offering of gifts, such as a few arrows.

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628 583

[584]

[585]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

Relationships Between Bands

There is no account of formal relationships between different bands of net hunters. Informal relationships are created through inter-band visits. These visits may be made by individual Pygmies or by whole families and may be occasioned by the desire (particularly among womenfolk) to see relatives or to seek a spouse, or by some dispute leading to ostracism, or by trouble between the individual concerned and his villager patron. The visits, according to Putnam, may become permanent but normally last only two or three months, which would allow for one or two changes of camp. These visits are important with respect to the practice of exchange marriage and lineage exogamy (which may amount to exogamy of the hunting band, though among the net hunters less frequently than among the archers) as an important way of allowing marriageable couples to meet and become known to each other's families.

Occasionally two or even three bands join to form a single hunting unit. Under these circumstances each sets up separate but adjoining camps. If, as may happen though rarely, this association continues, the camps are moved closer to each other and finally become part of the same camp. In one of the final stages of the process of fusion, the two groups build their huts in the same clearing, but each as a distinct unit. Similarly, fission may be preceded by a gradual physical splitting of the camp. Each

[P. 228-D]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

them. Youths join the older children at this game, but never in a supervisory capacity.

Youths may also join the children on their swings in the *bopi*, and will almost certainly build their swings for them, climbing high up into adjacent trees to drape a long liana between them. They then teach the younger children the wild somersaulting games on these swings that are particularly characteristic of the honey season. On the other side the youths equally often join the hunters but, again, always as a separate group, sometimes participating fully, but still as youths. And as youths they continue the process already begun in childhood, of growing more away from their nuclear families and together as an age group. Their hunting and scavenging abilities are greater, and they sometimes even maintain a self-sufficient food economy. As youths they are allowed to stay up at night, instead of retiring with their mothers, and they build their own fire near the hunters' fire and cook their own food and sing and dance, sometimes with the hunters and elders, sometimes separately.

As youths they are also given increasing responsibility, especially in the economic life of the band. They may listen to the discussions of the hunters and elders, but even if they make comments, as they do, they are not readily listened to unless it is a matter pertaining to their age group. Then they are required to be able to voice their opinions and cite precedents. They are expected to show an adult sense of responsibility in matters concerning sex and marriage, and although they may flirt quite openly and even audaciously, they never "play house," and not until after the *elima* will a girl again show her favor by cooking for a boy. Then it is tantamount to an admission of betrothal.

After marriage a boy acquires a net. It may be made for him by his mother, or his father may give him part of his net to which he will add, with his wife's help. He has already demonstrated his hunting prowess or he would not be married, but now he is a full hunter with additional responsibilities. Whereas economic activity is shared between the hunters and youths, it is the hunters who ultimately make the decisions concerning camp life, and about the hunt. Where to go for the daily hunt, when to move camp, to what region, how to deal with threats of physical danger, and how to surmount physical problems; such are the questions the hunter has to face. They all concern the band as a whole. Nonphysical dangers and problems—that is to say, moral, psychological and spiritual issues, those that affect the

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

PUBERTY: THE *ELIMA*

At the next crisis in the life cycle, however, it is the band rather than the nuclear family that takes charge. By early childhood the child has already grown away from its family to some extent, and become more a member of an age group cutting across kinship lines. At puberty the boy or girl may not even be living with kin any more, let alone in the nuclear family. But even if they are, the band takes control of the situation. It is an occasion that concerns the band as such, for adolescence leads into marriage, and marriage will inevitably bring about a significant change in the economic structure of the band. A member of the band may leave it, or a new member may join it, or, if the marriage is within the band, then at least there will still be an additional net, and a change in the hunting and gathering pattern and perhaps in interfamily alliances. The process of fission and fusion might also be affected by the political implications of the marriage. The *elima* is best regarded as a premarital festival. It does not necessarily lead directly into a marriage that is marriage in the sense of a final, childbearing union. It is rather a preparation for marriage, an opportunity for the youngsters to find suitable partners. It does not even have to end in betrothal, so there cannot be said to be a functional connection between *elima* and marriage.

The arrival at puberty among boys being somewhat less easy to determine, the signal for an *elima* is the first appearance of menstrual blood in a young girl. This is something that fills the local villagers with horror, and with fear of evil influences against which they take elaborate ritual precautions to protect themselves. These precautions are costly and inconvenient, and the girl who has brought both shame and annoyance to her family is hidden and treated harshly. There are elaborate cleansing ceremonies for the girl and her family. Among the Mbuti, however, the appearance of menstrual blood is a sign that the girl is now a potential mother, and it is consequently a signal for rejoicing and for preparation for motherhood. Thus an integral part of the festival is the selection of suitable potential husbands. Such selection demands that the boys prove their manhood, since it cannot be proven as simply as is the womanhood of the girl. In this sense, then, the *elima* is a joint initiation of boys and girls into adulthood. Having dealt with it in descriptive form elsewhere (Turn-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

881 836 833 842 In intercourse the only restriction I could discover was some rather vaguely stated prohibition on a boy holding his partner in his arms. Some adults say that this prevents conception, others say that the girls take contraceptive medicines. Whatever the reason, there is no documented or even reported case of pregnancy arising out of intercourse in an *elima* hut.

881 836 [594] The *elima* is given wide publicity (unlike the villager practice) and young men from neighboring bands are expected to come and participate. If they are whipped during a visit to their band by the *bamelima*, then they are obliged to return the visit. The latter part of the [584] festival is the time when prospective suitors are sought, though there is still no feeling that betrothal must necessarily result. At this time even the younger married men may enter the *elima* hut, though they will sleep with the senior girls rather than with the *bamelima*. It is nothing unusual for the husband of the provider of the house to do this, nor for an elder brother of one of the *elima* girls themselves. But at this time the younger boys are kept out.

881 152 584 Access to the hut may still be had by being whipped, but now there is an additional possibility. In the late afternoons the mothers gather outside the hut, with their carrying baskets, and with a good supply of sticks and stones and any other suitable ammunition. Any youth that wishes to declare his affection for one of the girls is free to attempt to enter the hut, but he must run the gauntlet of the women, who are perfectly capable of beating him soundly and even of throwing him in a river if they do not consider him suitable. Depending upon how well they favor him they will let him pass with anything from token to stiff resistance. If the resistance is stiff the suitor may use his bow and fire fruit peel or small pebbles with it, and fight the women back in this way. When the women become particularly aggressive the youths make a combined attack.

Minor injuries are frequently sustained, and the Mbuti say that in the old days the "war" used to be real, with arrows used instead of peelings. The important thing is that it is still impossible for a youth to enter the *elima* hut, at this stage of the festival, if the older women decide against it for any reason.[2]

881 584 Once inside he still has to face the girls, and the same conditions as before pertain except that if he is allowed to sleep with a girl and

[583] [2] The drama not only appears like a reenactment of the proverbial "marriage by capture," but some Mbuti say that they used to have to fight and carry off their brides in this manner.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

have intercourse with her, he must then stay in the *elima* hut until the end of the festival, and he will be considered as her betrothed. There is no doubt that the girls are, like their mothers, anxious to find suitable lovers who may become their betrothed, and it would indeed only be a particularly flirtatious girl who did not hope that her *elima* would end in betrothal. During the first weeks the girls have ample opportunity for experimentation, and it may be assumed that such experimentation began even before the festival began. But in the last two weeks they are looking for a future husband, and they take great pains to paint their bodies and make themselves beautiful for their evening appearances outside the *elima* hut.

These occasions are formal presentations of the girls as adults. For the first time they sing the *elima* songs and dance before the entire band, and for the first time the youths who are considered as suitable candidates sit together and join in the singing with the girls. Each youth will try to catch the attention of the girl of his choice, and each girl will try to respond, but the occasion is a serious one, and the mothers, who sit with the girls and separate them from the youths, sharply reprove anyone who is caught flirting. When the singing is over, the girls are shepherded back into their hut, and unless they come out in an attack with their whips, no boy may enter.

The length of the festival is anything from one to two months, and it ends without regard to the successful betrothal or otherwise of the *elima* girls. The girls are taken to a nearby stream in the early hours of one morning, and wash themselves carefully a number of times. I have heard them refer to this as "washing the blood," but this is also a village expression for the ritual purification of a menstruating woman, and it is impossible to be sure of the exact significance of the term for the Mbuti until more material is available. The washing, however, is unlike that of village ritual washing, being completely informal, the *elima* girls washing together with all the others, eating and drinking in between sessions of swimming and splashing and playing in the water. When it is over they return to the camp, rub their bodies with oil, sing and dance in public as much or as little as they like and without adult supervision. They continue to stay together throughout the day as a group, but in the evening they disperse to their individual homesteads. For the next few days this is repeated, without the washing, and then the camp returns to normal.

If a betrothal has been effected, the boy will wait for a suitable opportunity, then make the proper approach to the girl's parents, asking

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

584 for permission for her to live with him. He will already have proved his manhood by running the gauntlet and by sleeping with the girl, and the fact that he has succeeded in these endeavors is alone proof of his acceptance. He now only has to prove himself as a hunter, and the act of betrothal is sealed by his killing one of the larger antelope and presenting it to the girl's parents, perhaps also with some other gifts, such as a bow and arrows, bark cloth, or a machete.

584 591 The girl then goes to live with him, unless it is considered preferable, probably on grounds of band size, for the boy to join the girl's band. In either case, or if they both belong to the same band, the girl simply builds a hut without any ceremony, and they live in it. No particular note is made of the occasion, though there may be a few jokes made at their expense, and they will be allowed considerable 58 freedom from camp routine for a few days. No further change in status [851] takes place until the girl becomes pregnant, at which time we might consider that the betrothal becomes effective as marriage. Separation before this takes place is perfectly possible and likely, and takes place without any comment, difficulty or restitution. Separation later, after childbirth, is more rare. If a couple have lived together for a long time (over a year) without having children, they will also be considered as married. This is unusual, however, for the object of marriage is in good part to have children, and if a couple fails, each will accuse the other of sterility and seek a new partner.

584 621 583 In seeking a partner who has not slept with him in the *elima* hut, a boy goes through the same procedure, except that the band will be called on to give its approval, and the prospective union will be discussed, elders having the most say. If he is refused, and if he and the girl are persistent, they may elope, joining another band. In this case that other band will be expected to provide a girl in exchange, for the system, such as it is, is one of sister exchange in the widest classificatory sense of the term. It frequently does take place between full brothers and sisters, but equally frequently there is no attempt to effect exchange so long as the married couple remains within the band. If the marriage is out of the band, then any return marriage, regardless of kinship, is considered to restore the balance. Again, in view of the constant fluctuation in band composition, it would be of no advantage for any more formal system to pertain.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

MARRIAGE

Betrothal and marriage among the Mbuti, then, are permissive. Prescriptions and prohibitions are minimal, and even preferences are not dominant. But permission of the band or bands involved is required. In giving assent a band does not concern itself with the niceties of the kinship relationships involved, nor with the question of reciprocal obligations and privileges, except for the question of sister exchange. While not expecting an immediate exchange to be made, or even asking for a suitable future exchange partner to be named, the band bears this reciprocal obligation in mind and will demand that it be fulfilled the moment such fulfillment becomes necessary to band composition.

Considerations in approving a betrothal or marriage are personal and economic, and to a lesser extent political. The affections of the two individuals concerned is of the utmost concern to everyone, for great mutual affection is considered to lead to a "real marriage" rather than an "empty marriage"; that is to say, affection is thought to carry the desire for children, and will so bring stability to the marriage. But the band is also concerned with the character of any individual, male or female, who will join them through marriage. A boy wishing to marry a notorious flirt and bring her to live with him is likely to meet considerable opposition, and may have to go to live with her band. In that case they will consider how faithful he is likely to be, or whether he will find he prefers his own territory to his wife, and will abandon her to return to his own band. In the general discussion that takes place when a betrothal or marriage is proposed these are the kinds of issues discussed, together with the personal habits of the newcomer —cleanliness, laziness, talkativeness and noisiness.

The hunting and gathering abilities of the individuals are also discussed, first to decide whether they are able to look after themselves, and second in relationship to the band economy. As with personal considerations, the discussion is of particular importance if one or the other of the proposed partners is a newcomer. If the marriage is within a band the same discussion takes place, but because both partners are known well the problem is much simpler and arouses less argument. There may still be differences of opinion, however, as to whether the couple are likely to have a real marriage or an empty one.

The band will also discuss the question of residence. If the band is

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

584 small it will wish a boy to stay or a girl to bring her husband to live
591 with her. If the band is large, however, it will prefer to lose a member.
621 If the marriage is within the band, and the band is large, the couple may still go to join another band, the choice of which being determined by size again, more than by any other consideration. The presence of friends or relatives and knowledge of the territory are important but secondary considerations. This question of residence falls primarily upon the hunters to decide; the elders have little to say.

DEATH

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[177] In death, the final crisis of the life cycle, we again see a lack of emphasis on kinship, though once more perhaps we should bear in mind that the contact between the Mbuti and the villagers has undoubtedly affected not only kinship and ritual terminology, but also kinship relations and ritual practice. Be that as it may, in the present context, death is of immediate concern to both the nuclear family and the whole band. For the nuclear family, and for other members of the
761
152 family who have during their lives been close to the deceased person, it is an occasion for grief. This grief is freely expressed by young and old together, and may at times become apparently uncontrollable. In the same way that the Mbuti are given to excessive bursts of laughter, often developing into near hysteria, so when they weep they do so
761 with what amounts almost to violence. Children of the deceased,
763 without regard to age or sex, begin weeping the moment they hear
152 the news of death, or as soon as a sick person indicates that he is not going to live much longer. If news of sickness or death reaches a relative some distance away, the relative will shout and yell rather than weep, and will continue this way until he reaches the camp where the sick person is lying. Immediately on entering the camp he will burst into tears, and wailing loudly will enter the hut and throw himself on the ground at the bedside of the dying person. Sometimes a close relative will injure himself with self-inflicted knife wounds, or by tying a halter around his neck and trying to strangle himself. Others pay little attention to these demonstrations of grief and I have never seen
[889] any serious injury result. Elders look on, however, with some disapproval, and will intervene if there is any danger of such injury.

763 The rest of the adults in the band will sit around outside their huts,
152 watching the wailers run in and out of the sick person's hut, and while they themselves are likely to be serious and upset they are also likely

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P.218]

CHAPTER 12

Government: External

BAND TO BAND

628 621 *Marriage*

As already seen, the occasions calling for political relationships between one band and another in the forest context are minimal. Insofar as bands can be considered to exist only with respect to forest hunting territory, they cease to exist as political units when in the village, and there even the little interband relationship that pertains in the forest disappears completely.

628 584 574 571 561 There are basically only three areas of relationship, two of which might be considered formal, or institutional—marriage and trespass. The third, probably the most important structurally, is the interfamily visit. In all three areas there are no recognized or set patterns, each instance being conducted according to the context of the moment. But it will be seen at once that the relationships involved are once again along age lines. Marriage involves an interchange and a relationship between the elders of one band and the elders of another, between the youths of the one and the youths of the other. Trespass involves the hunters. Interfamilial exchange generally involves the older hunters, in my experience, or young married individuals who want on occasion to visit their parents and friends in their old band.

628 584 574 [591] If marriage is contemplated between two youths of different bands, it will be the result of their having met through interfamilial exchange, or while in the village. There will have been an exchange of visits between the individuals, and when their intentions are made known it is likely, but by no means inevitable, that the family of each will visit the other's band in turn, building their hut close to that of their child's future in-laws.

628 584 561 The propriety of the marriage will have been discussed within each band, primarily by the elders; there is no exchange of this kind be-

2: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

tween the elders of the two bands unless there is some extraordinary complication, such as the adamant objection of the parental age level of one band or the other. If this happens, then two or three elders, male or female, come to visit the elders of the other band, and when the visit is over they will return, taking with them two or three elders to discuss the issue with their band. There is no privilege attached in such exchanges to either band because of sex; any privilege there might be depends upon the question of territory. Thus the band where the young couple is expected to live and hunt, regardless of whether their child is the bride or the groom, is considered as privileged, and consequently is to an undefined extent under obligation to the other band. However, as the question of residence is primarily an economic factor, depending on the relative sizes of the bands, it is generally settled to mutual satisfaction, and residence is not, in itself, a frequent cause of conflict.

Elders may be called upon to interact between two bands if the balance of sister exchange is becoming disproportionate. However, this too is essentially a question of economic balance and is only called to count if a band needs to strengthen itself. Again the issue of locality is more important in determining the matter than is the issue of sex. That is to say, in Mbuti society "sister exchange" can also, under certain circumstances, be regarded as "brother exchange," although insofar as patrilocality is the more usual pattern, so is "sister exchange" more appropriate. However, a band that needs strengthening and has just received a bride for one of its members may conceivably demand that the other band execute the rest of the exchange and provide a groom for one of their girls. They can then insist that he come to live with them. The fact that they have gained by both marriages is excused because of their economic situation.

However regarded, the exchange system is so loose that it is easily adaptable as a mechanism for maintaining hunting bands at economic strength. To this end the hunters have some voice, but it is an issue that is too clear-cut even to call for discussion, and once the issue is considered on grounds other than band size—i.e., the propriety of the marriage or exchange balance—it is in the hands of the elders. But even more is it all in the hands of the two individuals concerned, for although a serious depletion in the size of the band can induce hunters and elders alike to bring great pressure on its youths to marry, they cannot force such marriage. Interfamilial exchange, after all, is a perfectly simple method of increasing band strength, at least tem-

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The women can throw in their opinions, particularly if they know that the area the men have selected is barren of vegetable foods. But the men usually know this anyway.

If the question is one of marriage, and a father announces that he does not like the girl his son has chosen, his son can call on all his friends to help him. If he is strong and holds out, the whole group will be assembled to discuss the case. If they agree with the father, then either the boy has to give up his talk of matrimony or else make up his mind to marry the girl anyway. In the latter case he would probably go and live with her hunting group. But it is seldom that things come to such a pass.

In fact, Pygmies dislike and avoid personal authority, though they are by no means devoid of a sense of responsibility. It is rather that they think of responsibility as communal. If you ask a father, or a husband, why he allows his son to flirt with a married girl, or his wife to flirt with other men, he will answer, "It is not my affair," and he is right. It is *their* affair, and the affair of the other men and women, and of their brothers and sisters. He will try to settle it himself, either by argument or by a good beating, but if this fails he brings everyone else into the dispute so that he is absolved of personal responsibility.

If you ask a Pygmy why his people have no chiefs, no lawgivers, no councils, or no leaders, he will answer with misleading simplicity, "Because we are the people of the forest." The forest, the great provider, is the one standard by which all deeds and thoughts are judged; it is the chief, the lawgiver, the leader, and the final arbitrator.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ing that he is not only capable of feeding his own family but also able to help feed the older members of the group who can no longer fend for themselves.

Once a boy has gained access to the elima hut he may flirt or even sleep with the girl who invited him. The elima gives an opportunity for boys and girls to get to know each other intimately, and such friendships often end in marriage. On the other hand, it gives two lovers a chance to discover that they are unsuited to each other before becoming betrothed officially. From what I was told, by older men and women as well as by the bachelors who took part in this elima, it is even possible to have intercourse, but with certain restrictions. These restrictions must be effective in preventing conception, because nowhere have I ever heard of a girl becoming pregnant in an elima house. A boy may sleep with a girl only if she consents. The tacit consent of her mother has already been given by his having been allowed to gain access to the elima house. If he sleeps with her then he must not leave the house and has to stay there until the festival is over, subject to the same restrictions as the girls. But he may decide on just a mild flirtation. Or he may—and this is considered a master move—simply turn around and leave the house without having paid the slightest attention to any of the girls. Whatever happens, there are always young women, such as Kondabate, to keep an eye on their younger companions and see that they do not get into trouble.

The conclusion of this particular elima was an anticlimax. The Pygmies are not a ritualistically minded people; to them the important thing about any festival is that they should openly express their emotions and accept the realities of whatever situation the festival marks. Instead of living in constant fear of the spirits of the dead, performing elaborate rituals to remove the souls of the departed as far away as possible and as quickly as possible, the Pygmies sing in their memory for months on end, during the molimo. And so,

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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good excuse for a mild flirtation and a great deal of feasting. If two Pygmies want to get married, and they are near a village, then they gladly undergo the village ritual, sanctifying the bond later in their own manner. Everyone is happy; the villagers think the marriage is a success because it was performed according to their customs, while the Pygmy knows it is a success because it followed his as well.

The villagers naturally looked on the elima as a prelude to the marriages of Akidinimba and Kidaya. The Pygmies, however, regarded it in no such light. They wanted to get back to the forest, where the girls could get married in their own time and in their own way. This would involve no more than an exchange of visits between the families concerned, and the groom's presentation to his in-laws of a large antelope, and perhaps some arrows and a bow. But none the less they were tempted by the idea of more feasting. So there was considerable conflict of ideas and ideals, particularly as the villagers had their own ideas as to whom the girls should marry.

The elima had created a crisis in another direction also. Pumba, whom Akidinimba had loved so ardently and beaten so thoroughly to show her affection, had kept his part of the bargain by coming to the elima house during the final week, fighting his way in as a man. But once inside, instead of making love to Akidinimba he paid court to Kidaya. Fortunately for Kidaya, but unfortunately for Pumba, she did not respond, and without her permission Pumba had no way of forcing his attentions further. So he stalked out of the elima house, pursued by shrieks of rage from Akidinimba. He took his friend Kelemoke's hand briefly, then left without a word. He crossed the Epulu and went back to his camp, and he was seen no more.

Everyone was upset, because they all felt that the sooner Akidinimba got married the better. Besides, Pumba was popular—so much so that some pressure was brought to bear on Kidaya to force her to accept him. But Kidaya had set her heart on a handsome youth named Atete, who was attached to the village of Katala, several miles

beyond Eboyo. So she refused to have anything to do with Pumba.

Since the prime objective was to get Akidinimba married, once it was plain that Kidaya would not take Pumba, everyone lost interest in her and returned to the problem of her fellow initiate. Circumstance forced the issue, for while all this was going on a close relative of Akidinimba's, a boy named Mulanga, decided to get married to Atete's sister. Nobody saw any harm in this, and so arrangements were pursued and they were duly married. Mulanga was quite nonplused by the ritual, for he had spent most of his life in the forest and knew little of village customs. He was particularly perturbed when at the end of the ceremony his bride was seized by a village woman and led away. He was not quite sure what to do and trotted behind them at a safe distance until he was able to follow his wife into the house that had been set aside for him.

Mulanga's marriage meant that he was obliged to provide a sister for his bride's brother, Atete, to marry. Villagers will compensate families for the loss of a daughter by the payment of money or goods, but the Pygmies find it necessary to arrange for an exchange, so that no group is ever depleted of its womenfolk. Akidinimba, who had still not forgotten how she had been jilted and insulted, saw in this situation an opportunity for revenging herself on Kidaya, the unwilling receiver of Pumba's attentions. So she volunteered to marry Atete. Everyone, except Kidaya, was delighted, and Atete and his family agreed. By the time the date for the wedding was set, Akidinimba began to have doubts and thinking of the freedom she was about to lose she wept day and night. But there was no escape. The villagers of Katala had arranged a great feast and this made everyone all the more anxious for the wedding.

Atete, however, heard of some honey far off in the forest, several days' march away, and at the last moment he set off. The villagers protested loudly, but Atete merely said that the wedding could take place any time, but the honey could not wait. As it was only a

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THE MARRIAGE OF KENGE

Kenge's decision came almost as much as a surprise to her as it did to the rest of us, as he was as notorious as Akidinimba for being a confirmed flirt. In fact, most people thought he would marry Biyo, Tungana's daughter. But Kenge said no, Tungana was almost like a relative to him, and it would be incest to marry his daughter. People pointed out that this had not stopped him from sleeping with Biyo, but Kenge maintained that the two situations were totally different. Anyway, he had set his heart on Maliamo, and she had set her heart on him.

The situation dragged on for so long that Kenge began to see rather more of Maliamo than was allowed by customary flirtation, and people began to whisper. This drove him to take more desperate measures with his sister.

One morning the village camp was awakened to the sound of terrified screaming from the house directly opposite mine, where Yambabo was sleeping. I looked out of my window and saw Kenge dragging his sister out of the hut by one arm, pulling her over the ground and shouting to the camp that she was no good and should be killed. He pointed to her breasts and said that she had enough milk to feed a dozen children, why did she refuse to marry? Yambabo was as strong as a buffalo, he continued, so why did she refuse to work? He then gave what he considered could be the only reason, which was extremely personal and uncomplimentary. Yambabo tried to get to her feet to hit him, but every time she began struggling he simply thumped her on the back with his fist, still keeping a tight hold of her with his other hand.

People came sleepily out of their huts to watch, all rather agreeing that Yambabo really should have married long ago and deserved a brotherly beating. Encouraged by this, Kenge began kicking her, and she responded by biting him in the leg. Moke tried to intervene, but it was no good. Kenge was ready for murder, and by the time he had finished with Yambabo she was a sorry sight, scratched and

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bleeding, with one eye swollen. And still she refused to marry Taphu.

From that morning on, we all accepted the fact that Kenge was going to continue beating his sister until she gave in, and it was just a question of how long she could hold out. One day, when her brother had been particularly bad-tempered with her she ran away to their mother's home, many miles to the east. I asked Kenge if he was going to follow her, but he shook his head. He said, "Our mother will beat her much more severely than I. She knows that Yambabo loves Taphu but is too lazy to get married. All she wants to do is to sleep with him. She is as bad as Akidinimba." And so he stayed, sitting by the fire all day in a sulk, leaving me to cook my own food and his.

That evening the old men discussed the case by the central fire, with the women throwing in remarks from the huts all around. They were unanimous in believing that Kenge had done the only thing he could have done. Perhaps he should have beaten her harder, Tungana said, for some girls like being beaten. And after all, it was not as though he had chosen her husband as the villagers do, sometimes forcing a young girl to marry an old and ugly man merely because he can pay more bride-wealth than a younger man. Everyone knew that Taphu loved Yambabo as much as she loved him. He had asked her to marry him half a dozen times at least and was constantly giving little presents of meat and honey to her mother.

The next morning, shortly after dawn, I heard loud weeping and saw a bedraggled Yambabo being marched into the camp by her irate mother, Badorinji. Kenge was wandering about searching for firewood, but he hardly even looked up. He just muttered, "Now you will see, I did not beat her for myself alone."

Badorinji led her daughter by the wrist into the middle of the little village. She called out in her loud, musical voice that her son had always been a good son, a father to his sisters ever since their

own father had died, and a man to her. And now that he wanted to have a wife of his own she had made him a hunting net, but what did this worthless girl do? She gave Yambabo a hefty slap. Yambabo, however, had lost all her fight and could only whimper. When she had reached her mother's village she had promptly been turned around and made to walk all the way back, right through the night. Badorinji continued, telling everyone that her daughter had been a no good right from the start; all she liked doing was eating, sleeping, and going with boys. She would do no work, and she had refused Taphu, who loved her, many, many times. Then Badorinji ended with a masterpiece of statesmanship. She said that she would betroth her youngest daughter to Taphu, which would allow Kenge to marry Maliamo, and that she would have nothing further to do with Yambabo. Yambabo would lose Taphu, and without her mother's help she would never be able to make a respectable marriage, for she had no other brothers. She could find someone to marry her, but unless a girl were given in exchange for her she would have no status and no security. Only her mother or Kenge could give her away and receive a girl in exchange.

Yambabo let out a cry of protest at this. She said that she was tired and wanted to lie down, and why did everyone shout at her. Her mother slapped her once more and asked her if she would marry Taphu or not. Yambabo, with a final wail of protest that everyone had treated her so badly that she would surely die, gave up the battle and said that she would marry Taphu, or anyone else for that matter.

For the first time Kenge stopped trying to pretend that he was not listening to what was going on. He called a young boy and told him to run to Babama village with the news, and to tell them to get ready to receive Yambabo's wedding party. He added, hopefully, "And tell Maliamo that she is my wife now and I want her to come here at once and cook my meals for me. I am too busy to go and collect her."

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593 He then went up to his mother and greeted her, which he had not done since she entered the camp. She put her arms around him, and it was strange to see the proud, sophisticated and very adult Kenge allowing himself to be embraced with such a show of affection. But what Badorinji had said was true—he was a good son. And he was a good brother too, for when Badorinji had finished hugging him, doing a little dance at the same time, he took the weeping Yambabo's hand and led her to the hut opposite mine, and there he put his arm around her and whispered something in her ear and he sent her inside to lie down and sleep.

• 584 Taphu sent word back that Yambabo would have to hurry as he was off to the forest and would not be back for a long time. Maliamo also sent a message, to say that the villagers would not let her come until Yambabo had married Taphu, because they did not trust Yambabo. The villagers announced their opinion that Kenge had already slept with Maliamo so much that it would not hurt him to wait. Kenge was furious, because this meant that he would have to go through a village wedding, unless he wanted to alienate the villagers by ignoring them. This would have meant losing good exchange-friends who kept him supplied with village goods in return for a few favors in the forest. Kenge enjoyed all the fun and games of a village wedding when someone else was involved, and he was content for Yambabo to go through the ceremony, but for himself he wanted no part of stupid village customs. He was going to carry Maliamo away and give her parents an antelope, or maybe an elephant, like any self-respecting Pygmy. He began dreaming out loud, describing exactly how he was going to track the elephant, and maybe kill a buffalo or two on the way, and he only came back to earth when I asked him how he was going to bring the elephant back to the village. He said that I would see; he was going to Maliamo right now. He set off at once. The next day he returned alone. Maliamo had gone into hiding, not wanting to jeopardize her broth-

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er's chances by going to live with Kenge before Yambabo had been well and truly bound to Taphu.

There was only one thing to do, so Kenge made arrangements for Yambabo to leave the next day, with a suitable wedding party. They would stop overnight at Katala's village and continue the next day to Babama. At this point an uncle of Taphu's died, and the Babama villagers sent a message that the wedding was off. Taphu, however, sent word that as far as the Pygmies were concerned the death made no difference and the wedding was on. Kenge did not want to offend the villagers at this stage, so he delayed a few days, and after a respectable lapse of time he finally sent the wedding party off. But not before Yambabo had had yet another change of mind. As she was being rubbed with palm oil and camwood paste, so that she would look her very best, she suddenly reached out for the hearth. Before anyone could stop her she had covered herself from head to foot in ashes, the sign of deepest mourning. As the rest of the party had already been oiled and painted for some time, and were anxious to be on their way, there was not much sympathy for Yambabo. They told her that if she wanted to walk through the villages like a ghost they did not mind, but one way or another she was going. Masisi, who was acting as her father, gave her a long lecture, during which his wife hurriedly wiped off the ashes and smeared on more oil.

The party finally got off and had a slow and pleasant journey, stopping in each village in the hopes of receiving presents of food and palm wine. It stopped over at Katala's, where the long-suffering family of Ngoma fed the whole party lavishly, and the next day it arrived at Babama. Yambabo was led through the village to the Pygmies' encampment, but the villagers came hurrying after. They said the wedding could not possibly take place there so soon after the death of a relative and would have to be held in the village. Taphu wandered out of his hut to see what was going on. He was dressed in a dreadful array of cast-off clothes given him by the villagers.

628 574 man, or even several men, may feel picked on, or in other words are unable to adjust themselves to the other members of the group in which they live. They will go on extensive visits to kinfolk in other bands, and some may never return. In this case they will [177] change their allegiance to new Negro hosts. Or they may have trouble with their Negroes and leave for this reason.

628 574 602 More frequently, however, a number of families will simply visit another camp, presumably because of the desire of women to spend some time with their parents, brothers, and other relatives. The camps are exogamous and the only chance a woman ordinarily has to see her own people is on such visits, during which the boys build up ties with their maternal uncles and [584] cousins. These visits, again, serve to establish relationships leading to marriage. Visits of this kind usually do not last more than two or three months, or the ordinary life of a camp site, but they serve to keep the pygmy world in a state or circulation, and to break up the monotony of the limited sets of relations possible among pygmies in a single camp and between pygmies and their specific Negroes.

595 582 **Marriage and divorce.**—The usual form of pygmy marriage is monogamy. One reason for this is the scarcity of women—many prefer to become second wives of Negroes and live in the ease of the village, thus avoiding the hardships of forest food gathering. 595 When a man does have two wives, one will live with him, while the other will live with her own kin, usually in a different camp, where he visits her on oc- [581] casion. Actually, the economic incentive to polygyny is absent, for whatever work the second wife performs benefits her own kinfolk only.

583 [582] Marriage takes place at or near puberty, and normally involves the technique of exchange. In its present

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583 form, this means that a man must offer his sister for marriage to his intended wife's brother. However, since all families do not contain an even number of boys and girls, this principle may be extended to the larger family group, and a young man may offer a cousin, or an older man a niece, as his exchange partner.

586 Divorce is common and as informal as marriage. Usually it is the woman who makes the initial decision: she simply packs up her belongings and moves out. She will take her children with her and will be considered a member of her own parents' kinship group until she should remarry. This principle is also followed in the case of a widowed woman. A divorced woman's sons will remain with her until they are old enough to go hunting, when they will rejoin their father.

Although the original pair in an exchange marriage may have been drawn to each other by mutual affection, the same is not always the case with the exchange partners, whose union may not be of long duration. The really [583] unpleasant feature of exchange marriage is that if one union breaks up, the complementary marriage must also be dissolved; hence, if one couple cannot tolerate each other they will cause the separation of the other.

589 836 Because of the scarcity of women, a certain number of young men are forced to live out a painful bachelorhood for a number of years. Such bachelors usually, if not always, dally with girls whom they cannot marry because of kinship, or with other men's wives, and are a constant cause of 583 trouble. However, if the family group 591 of a boy's father fails to get him a wife, 584 he may, in desperation, appeal to his mother's family group to provide one. 602 If they do, he will go to live with his mother's people, although he is still technically a member of his father's

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group and a stranger in the camp, if it is a different one.

Pygmy Symbolism

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Food tabus.—The pygmy recognizes certain animals as symbols of definite relationships or identifications, in connection with which recognition he observes special food tabus.

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This principle is particularly involved in connection with the animals which represent the clan totems. Each clan has its own private totem animal, which is not, in most cases, actually considered an ancestor. Rather, it has acquired its position because, in the local mythology, an animal of the same species performed some special act of kindness which got one of the clan ancestors out of a perilous situation.

The animals which symbolize clans are always animals which are hunted by men; they are never slow-game animals, which women collect. Vegetable species are never used as totems. The totems are animals which may or may not be caught, about whose capture there is some element of chance, some possibility of crisis, and they are usually food animals, although leopards and chimpanzees, which are off the main dietary line, are totemic animals.

The pygmy will avoid eating the flesh of his own clan totem, but he can eat the flesh of totemic animals of any other clan. However, the pygmy recognizes seven species of antelope, and a dozen of small monkeys; and the clan totem will be, for instance, one species of antelope, rather than all antelopes. Therefore, these tabus do not cause anyone much discomfort, for no one species of these animals accounts for more than a small fraction of the total food supply, and each clan can eat six out of seven kinds of antelope, or eleven out of twelve kinds of monkeys.

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